

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 06500 101811Z

67

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 NIC-01 IO-14 HEW-08 CIAE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 /125 W

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R 101715Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4737

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

DIA WASHDC//AA-2 AND DI-5//

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ROME 6500

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: POPE SPEAKS OUT ON DIVORCE ISSUE ON EVE OF REFERENDUM

REF: ROME 6426

1. POPE PAUL YESTERDAY GAVE HIS PUBLIC SUPPORT TO THE ANTI-DIVORCE STAND OF THE ITALIAN BISHOPS CONFERENCE (CEI). THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POPE, WHO DURING THE REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN HAD REFRAINED FROM ANY

COMMENT ON THE HOTLY CONTESTED DIVORCE ISSUE, LEFT THE VATICAN TO ADDRESS A GATHERING OF ITALIAN BISHOPS AT THE NEW CEI HEAD-QUARTERS IN ROME. IN HIS REMARKS, POPE PAUL STATED THAT HE COULD NOT REMAIN SILENT ON THE ISSUE AND THEREFORE WISHED TO STATE HIS "FULL ADHERENCE" TO THE CEI POSITION IN DEFENSE OF THE FAMILY. HE REFRAINED, HOWEVER, FROM STATING EXPLICITLY THAT CATHOLICS ARE OBLIGED TO VOTE DOWN THE EXISTING DIVORCE LAW AND DID NOT REPEAT THE CEI CONDEMNATION OF CATHOLICS DISSENTING FROM THE CHURCH POSITION ON THE DIVORCE ISSUE.

2. CALM AND NON-POLEMICAL IN TONE, THE POPE'S STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE ITALIAN BISHOPS POSITION ON THE REFERENDUM IS NONETHELESS BOUND TO BE SEEN BY SOME IN THE PRO-DIVORCE CAMP AS CHURCH INTERFERENCE AND IS LIKELY TO FURTHER EXACERBATE ANTI-CERICAL FEELINGS STIRRED UP DURING THE BITTER REFERENDUM DEBATE. THE IMPACT ON THE REFERENDUM'S OUTCOME IS IMPOSSIBLE TO MEASURE, BUT THE POPE'S STAND WILL CLEARLY TEND TO REINFORCE THE ANTI-DIVORCE ATTITUDE OF THOSE CATHOLIC VOTERS WHO HAVE BEEN WAVERING ON THEIR VOTE DECISION. IT ALSO PUTS THE CHURCH'S PRESTIGE IN ITALY MORE SQUARELY ON THE LINE IN THE REFERENDUM CONTEST.

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Message Attributes

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30 JUN 2005

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To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005